

E 241
.B9 P11
Copy 1

H I S T O R Y

OF THE

BUNKER HILL MONUMENT.

BY PROFESSOR PACKARD,

OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE.



BUNKER HILL MONUMENT.



From the Collections of the MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
volume 3d, now in press.



H I S T O R Y

OF THE

BUNKER HILL MONUMENT.

BY PROFESSOR PACKARD,
OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

P O R T L A N D :
B R O W N T H U R S T O N , P R I N T E R .

1853,

1056

1056

7

1056

19-07
1852

HISTORY OF THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT.

Soon after the celebration in honor of the completion of Bunker Hill Monument, it occurred to the writer, that a faithful record of this enterprise might possess value in future years, and that he would attempt the work with a view to the presentation of the facts here narrated. It may be due to others as well as himself, to declare, that no suggestion from any quarter prompted this effort. What he has done has been done throughout, wholly at his own instance. He has taken pains to obtain precise and accurate information, and has had access to sources of the highest authority, which in a few years may be wholly beyond the reach of any who may be curious enough to investigate the matters here contained.

BRUNSWICK, ME. MAY, 1852.

ALPHEUS S. PACKARD.

HISTORY.

THE writer proposes to give a brief history of the Monument on Bunker Hill. He thinks it desirable to record for future generations a true statement of the origin and progress of one of the most imposing monuments of modern times; of the sources from whence the means of erecting it were obtained; of the embarrassments which impeded or interrupted the work; and to secure the remembrance of those who were most efficient and laborious in an enterprise so honorable to them and to our common country. It is thought, that hereafter it may be a matter of curiosity to know the facts here stated. What makes the subject especially interesting is, that this noble structure was reared by voluntary contributions, with the exception only of a comparatively small amount granted for the purpose by the Legislature of Massachusetts; and when completed, the projectors and builders had no more property in it than any other citizens of the State. Moreover the accomplishment of the enterprise was owing mainly to the energy and munificence of a few, whose names, although in this matter they were as far from selfish or private aims as men can be, are not known as they ought to be. The statements here made have been obtained from the records of the Standing and Building Committees of the Bunker Hill Association, from printed documents issued under the sanction of the Association, from the "History of the Siege of Boston," a valuable work recently published

by Richard Frothingham, Jr. Esq., and from private sources of undoubted authority, to which the public could not have access.

We have the authority of Hon. Edward Everett for affirming, that the idea of such a monument was first conceived by William Tudor Esq. It is due to another gentleman of well known public spirit and who, as will be seen, was an active and efficient promoter of the enterprise, to state, that in April 1822 the following spirited paragraph appeared in the Boston Patriot, which is worthy of a place in this record, as being the first effort to call public attention to the object.

“FOR THE BOSTON PATRIOT.

BUNKER HILL.

A lot of ground, including the monument erected to the memory of Gen. Warren, and the remains of the ‘Breast Work,’ thrown up on the eve of the Battle fought on that spot on the 17 of June 1775, is advertised to be sold at auction the first day of May.

As a site so memorable should not be covered with buildings, it is hoped, that some patriotic gentlemen of wealth in the town of Charlestown will purchase this American Marathon and have it enclosed with a stone or iron fence, to be held sacred, as the spot where the defenders of the Republic first met the shock of battle “in times which tried men’s souls.”

No stranger from other States visits this part of the union who does not wish to stand where fought the Champions of Liberty. Future generations will hold that blood-stained height in proud remembrance. There repose the ashes of the brave ; there was planted the Tree of Liberty. Let not the glorious sepulchre of our Revolutionary warriors be profaned.”

Within a day or two after this paragraph appeared, Mr. Tudor, having ascertained from the Editor, that the writer was

Gen. H. A. S. Dearborn, called on him, and after referring to the article which had attracted his notice, consulted him on the measures which should be adopted to secure the land. An interest was soon excited in the minds of several gentlemen, and as the result of their conference on the expediency of securing the land as an area for a monument to commemorate the great event of which it was the theatre, Dr. J. C. Warren of Boston purchased the land in Nov. 1822 and held it until the Monument Association, subsequently formed, took it from his hands. It is honorable to Boston and to that generation, that many were ready to coöperate by more than good words and kind wishes in what was manifestly to prove an arduous and protracted labor. Several meetings of those interested in the project were held at Dr. Warren's house. A breakfast party of gentlemen consisting among others of Hon. Daniel Webster, Professor Ticknor, Dr. John C. Warren, Hon. William Sullivan, Hon. George Blake and William Tudor, Esq. assembled at the house of Col. Perkins, and then visited the battle ground, and consulted on the subject of a monument. It was to this occasion, it is presumed, that Mr. Webster refers in his address at the completion of the monument when he remarks; that the first measures towards erecting the monument were adopted in the house of Thomas H. Perkins, Esq., where the projectors of the scheme assembled for the purpose. Soon after, a Circular dated May 10, 1823, signed by Messrs. Webster, William Tudor and Theodore Lyman, Jr., called the first public meeting of those friendly to the object, which was held at the Merchant's Exchange, when measures to obtain an act of Incorporation were adopted.

ORGANIZATION &c.

The following twenty-four individuals were incorporated under

the name of "The Bunker Hill Monument Association," "for the construction of a monument in Charlestown to perpetuate the memory of the early events of the American Revolution;" Joseph Story, Jesse Putman, Daniel Webster, Edward Everett, Samuel D. Harris, Samuel Swett, Theodore Lyman, Jr., Stephen Gorham, Jr., Thomas H. Perkins, William Tudor, Henry A. S. Dearborn, Benjamin Gorham, Franklin Dexter, William Sullivan, George Ticknor, Charles R. Codman, Warren Dutton, Isaac P. Davis, Thomas Harris, Seth Knowles, Benjamin Welles, John C. Warren, George Blake and Francis C. Gray. The act bears date June 7, 1823. By a subsequent act, the monument, on its completion, with the land on which it stands and its appurtenances, was to be assigned and transferred to the Commonwealth, on condition, that the State shall keep the monument and its appurtenances in good repair forever.

At a meeting, June 17, 1823, the Association made choice of Gov. Brooks for President. A by-law of the Association, passed at this meeting, requires a Board of thirteen Directors to be chosen at the annual meetings of the Corporation, who were to have the general control of the funds and the general direction of the affairs of the association. An additional by-law, June 19, increased the number of this Board to twenty-five, and by another, passed June 1825, the Directors were made responsible for any expenditure beyond the amount of funds actually collected for the purpose of building the monument.

WAYS AND MEANS, &c.

It may well be supposed, that much preliminary labor, of which the public knew little or nothing and which was done by a few individuals, was required before the structure could be commenced.

The first object was to awaken general interest in a project

which was to depend for its accomplishment mainly, if not entirely, on private contributions. The Directors accordingly, July 19, 1823, were empowered to elect Honorary members of the Association. At the same meeting all settled clergymen of New England were chosen honorary members. It was also voted, that all persons subscribing five dollars to the object should thereby become members; and that those subscribing a less sum than five dollars and not less than one, should have their names recorded in a manuscript prepared for the purpose; measures, which, it would seem, addressed the principle of patriotism in every New England bosom and were adapted to make the enterprise one of general concern. A year, however, passed before this appeal to the public was effectually made. At a meeting of the Directors, July 1824, a standing Committee of five was constituted to exercise the powers of the Directors in managing the affairs of the association, composed of the following gentlemen; Gen. H. A. S. Dearborn, Dr. John C. Warren. Hon. Edward Everett, George Blake Esq. and Samuel D. Harris Esq. This Committee, at their second meeting, August 9, took the first steps towards the vigorous prosecution of the enterprise in the following plan of proceedings, reported by Dr. Warren, for promoting the object of the association.

“1. That a letter explaining the object of the association be prepared and circulated among the members of the community able to promote its design by their aid or interest.

2. That a letter be addressed to the town of Charlestown requesting their coöperation and aid.

3. That a public appeal be made in the Newspapers upon the subject.

4. That letters be addressed to the young men of Boston, Charlestown and Salem, to engage their interest in the cause.

5. That Committees be appointed in the said meetings of the young men to procure subscriptions.

6. That an enlarged drawing of the Plan of the Monument be exhibited in conspicuous public places.

7. That subscription books be opened for different sums in different columns or pages ; as for sums of 5, 10 and to 500, and above 500 dollars.

8. That no effort be spared to forward the work in such a manner, that the corner stone of the monument may be laid June 17, 1825."

Mr. Everett was requested to prepare a letter according to the first article, and Gen. Dearborn, to address a letter to the town of Charlestown agreeably to the second.

In pursuance of this general scheme a circular, subscribed by all the Directors, was sent to a large number of individuals throughout New England and the other States. Certain individuals were particularly addressed throughout the country and Americans residing in London and Paris, and their patronage was solicited for the object. Subscription books were prepared for general circulation in the more considerable towns, and letters were sent to gentlemen in other States, who were corresponding members of the association, requesting them to take charge of procuring subscriptions in their several States. Ward committees were appointed in Boston for the purpose of raising subscriptions. A large number of gentlemen of influence and distinction throughout New England were elected Associates, among whom were the members of the Senate and House of Representatives of Massachusetts, the Governors, Lieutenant Governors and Councilors of the several New England States, and special meetings of the Associates were recommended to be held in the leading towns. A Diploma with a vignette was prepared as a certificate of membership for such as subscribed the requisite sum. The clergymen of the Commonwealth were addressed by letter and requested to call the attention of their people to the object on the day of the Annual Thanksgiving.

The Subscription Books, two hundred in number, were returned, April, 1825 ; by which it appeared, that about 2500 individuals had subscribed sums varying from 5 to 500 dollars. To these were added the funds of the Washington Benevolent

Society, and the State Grant, March 1827, from which last the association received 6000 dollars. The sum total received from these sources was about \$65,000.

Three acres only were secured at the outset through the instrumentality of Dr. Warren. In consequence of difficulties connected with the purchase of additional land, an Act of the Legislature, Feb. 1825, was obtained, empowering the Association to take and appropriate land which might be needed, not exceeding five acres, with such provisions as are common in such Acts. As an illustration of the embarrassments from which even so noble and patriotic an enterprise was not exempted, it may be stated, that the Committee of the Association and the Proprietors of the land had agreed upon appraisers to appraise the land, all the Proprietors seeming heartily to concur in the wish, that the battle field should be secured by the Association. Each party entered into bonds, with a penalty, to abide by the decision of the appraisers. One of the owners, however, on being applied to for his deed, encouraged the Committee to go on and transact the business with the rest of the owners. After the remaining proprietors had conveyed their respective portions and he was applied to again for his deed, he deliberately paid over the forfeiture agreed upon, \$500, and demanded \$5000 for his land. The Committee were struck dumb; but perceiving, that his design was to take advantage of the urgency of the case and to drive a hard bargain, and reflecting, that a contention at that time might delay the whole enterprise for an indefinite period, they reluctantly paid the ungenerous and exorbitant exaction. The whole amount of land which the Association had now become possessed of was fifteen acres.

LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE.

The necessary arrangements were now made for the ceremony

of laying the Corner Stone. Nothing was omitted to make the occasion as impressive as possible and thus to give an impulse to the enterprise. The day selected for the ceremonial was the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. General Lafayette, at the time the nation's guest, had been invited to be present, and to assist in the ceremony. Many survivors of the Revolution, some of whom shared in the danger and glory of the 17th June, 1775, were to participate in the scenes of the day. Hon. Daniel Webster was to address the assembled multitude. Nothing was wanting to give dignity and interest to the occasion.—Providence smiled by granting a lovely day. All New England was largely represented, and great numbers were present from the other States of the Union. A procession was formed at the State House in Boston at an early hour, agreeably to a Programme, published in the newspapers, and marched to the summit of Bunker Hill in Charlestown. The van, composed of a large military escort in brilliant array, two hundred veterans of the Revolution in barouches, some wearing the equipments of their ancient and honorable service, a large body of the Masonic Fraternity in splendid regalia, an extended line of different societies with their badges and banners, and conspicuous among all, the honored guest of the Nation, General Lafayette, the streets thronged even to the house tops with a joyous multitude, all together presented a spectacle never before witnessed on this Continent. With appropriate solemnities the stone was laid in presence of the vast concourse by the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, assisted by Hon. D. Webster, President of the Monument Association, and General Lafayette. The procession then moved to a spacious amphitheatre on the northern declivity of the hill to listen to the address of Mr. Webster. The arrangements were all happily devised and successfully executed. The address was in the highest degree worthy of the eminent orator and of the great

event which it commemorated and has become an abiding portion of the literature of our country. •

DESIGNS FOR THE MONUMENT.

The corner stone was laid before the plan for the proposed monument was fully matured. An advertisement in the newspapers had offered a premium of one hundred dollars for the best design; and in consequence of this about fifty plans and designs were submitted by architects and men of taste, of which the obelisk and column were the prevailing forms.* Gentlemen of high cultivation and taste urged a design after some model of classical antiquity. The first committee to whom the subject was entrusted consisted of Daniel Webster, Loammi Baldwin, George Ticknor, Gilbert Stewart and Washington Allston, and scarcely could more artistic talent and taste have been found in any five men who might have been selected in the land. Much discussion on the most appropriate form ensued. The Debates in the Board of Directors were distinguished by great ability and extensive learning. At a special meeting, May 19, 1825, the various projects were reduced by vote to the two, of a column and obelisk. A new committee, consisting of H. A. S. Dearborn, Edward Everett, Seth Knowles, S. D. Harris and T. H. Perkins, were appointed to procure designs of both these forms with estimates. This Committee reported June 7; and after a long and animated discussion on the comparative merits of the two plans the question was decided. Of the sixteen directors present, on a

* The distinguished artist, HORATIO GREENOUGH, recently deceased, was then an undergraduate in Harvard College. He sent to the Committee a Design with an Essay, in which he advocated the obelisk with so much power and taste, as to excite the marked attention of the Board. The Design finally adopted was that of Greenough's modified by the taste and judgment of Col. Baldwin.

motion to adopt the column, five voted in the affirmative and eleven, in the negative. The form of the obelisk was then adopted, as being the most simple and imposing, most in accordance with the republican sentiment, and most appropriate to the character of the event to be commemorated. The following gentlemen were then appointed a Committee to report a design ; Loammi Baldwin, (whose opinions in favor of the obelisk had been urged with great and convincing force,) George Ticknor, Jacob Bigelow, Samuel Swett and Washington Allston. This Committee reported a design or plan drawn by Solomon Willard, which was adopted, July 5, 1825. It may be stated, that after the decision, and after the work was commenced in earnest, a proposal was made to substitute for the obelisk a large and imposing edifice in gothic style, but the proposal was not entertained.

The design of the monument having been decided, it was found necessary to provide a new and more massive foundation. The stone laid before was deposited in the centre of the new foundation ; and the box of deposits, which had been placed within it, is now enclosed in the present corner stone at the North Eastern angle of the structure looking towards the point where the enemy landed on the morning of the battle.

PROGRESS OF THE WORK.

At a meeting of the Directors, Oct. 17, 1825, a Building Committee, consisting of Dr. J. C. Warren, Gen. H. A. S. Dearborn, George Blake, Amos Lawrence and William Sullivan Esqs., was appointed and was constituted " a Standing Committee, with authority to exercise all the powers of the Directors in the management of the affairs of the Association." Their special duty was to commence and prosecute the building of the obelisk, to make the necessary contracts and to superintend the

work, subject in all things and in all respects to the control of the Directors. They were never to exceed the amount appropriated by the Directors, and were to make a quarterly exhibit in writing of their proceedings to the Board of Directors. It should be stated, that a vote establishing such a committee was passed several months, before gentlemen could be found who were willing to undertake the onerous and responsible service which it imposed.

The Building Committee at once made choice of Solomon Willard as their architect and Superintendent, and committed to him the execution of the work in all its details.

The merits of this noble spirited man deserve permanent record. On accepting the office, thus tendered him, he requested permission to discharge the duties of it without compensation ; a request, however, which was not granted, although only a nominal salary was given him of five hundred dollars a year. His zeal and devotion to the work knew no bounds. He walked more than three hundred miles to examine different quarries of stone, and labored incessantly and with skill and judgment possessed by few, with no other compensation than was sufficient to meet his necessary expenses. As an illustration of the spirit of this man, it may be added, that at a subsequent period, the Bunker Hill Ledge, of which we shall soon speak, having become greatly enhanced in value, was sold at a considerable advance to a Company, who paid him one thousand dollars for his share which he had held himself responsible for at the time of the first purchase. A friend proposed to him to lay aside that sum for a time of need ; but he decisively rejected the proposal with the remark : "Do you suppose I would soil my hands by making money out of the Bunker Hill Monument ?" He paid over the thousand dollars as a subscription to the object. Had other men, with much larger means, possessed the same spirit, the Monument would

have been completed at a much earlier period, and without the embarrassments and delays which caused the best friends of the project so much mortification and discomfort.

The Committee on the Design determined only the size of the obelisk, and that, not so much as a question of taste, as one of economy, which they were compelled to regard strictly, on account of the limited amount of funds which they could safely calculate upon. The details, indeed the whole execution of the work, was confided entirely to Mr. Willard, as Architect and Superintendent. Mr. James S. Savage was employed as Builder under Mr. Willard, and on account of his superior skill and fidelity deserves honorable mention. To have secured the services of two such men was of the greatest importance to the success of the undertaking.

After careful examination the Building Committee, under advice of Mr. Willard, purchased, Nov. 1825, four acres of the sienite granite of Quincy, eight miles distant from Boston, which had been already brought into favorable notice as a material for building. The portion then purchased was henceforth called "the Bunker Hill Ledge." The labor of quarrying was commenced at once. The first rail way in the United States was constructed in 1826 for the uses of the Monument Association, although under an entirely distinct organization, and a contract for the transportation of stone from the Ledge to Bunker Hill was authorized, Feb. 1827. The stone was conveyed by railway to the water in Quincy, thence in flat boats, towed by steam vessels, to the wharf in Charlestown, and to the summit of the Hill by teams running on an inclined plane. This mode of transportation, in consequence of the delay incident to a repeated transfer of heavy materials, and of the liability to accident and defacement, was subsequently abandoned, and the materials were conveyed by ox-teams directly from the quarry to the Hill.

All necessary arrangements having been made, the excavation for the the new foundation, which, as has been already stated, was found necessary, was commenced March 1827. Dr. Warren having declined acting as Chairman of the Building Committee, at the meeting of the Directors in June the Committee was constituted as follows: Hon. Thomas H. Perkins, William Sullivan Esq., Gen. Dearborn, Amos Lawrence Esq. and Dr. Warren.

In July the foundation was finished. This part of the structure is twelve feet deep, fifty feet square at the bottom, laid in lime with greatest care, and contains more than 1300 tons of stone and more than 30,000 feet of rough dressing.

In September 1828 the monument had been raised fourteen courses, nearly forty feet, and there was material on the spot sufficient to carry it eighteen feet higher. The Association had expended all their funds, and 1600 dollars had been borrowed of the Suffolk Bank on liberal terms, on the joint and several note of Messrs. Lawrence, Sullivan, Dearborn, Warren, and Perkins, the Building Committee, on the pledge of the land owned by the Association (reserving the square around the Monument.) A few days after, the additional sum of 5000 dollars, payable on demand, was borrowed of the same Bank on the joint and several note of the same gentlemen, and in Jan. 1829 another sum of 1400 dollars was borrowed in the same way. At this last date, it was voted, that as the Building Committee had gone to the full extent of the disposable property of the Association and as far as public opinion would require of them, all work at Quincy or elsewhere, attended with any expense to the Association, should be wholly suspended. Mr. Willard was discharged from the service of the Association with such expression of respect and regard as were due to his merits as an architect and his spirit as a man. Thus it appears, that at the time of this suspension of the work the Association

was indebted to the amount of 23000 dollars, for which five individuals were personally responsible. Unless measures were soon adopted to procure funds by subscription, or in some other way, the individuals thus exposed had no other means of relief than the sale of the land owned by the Association.

EMBARRASMENTS &c

We have arrived at a period in the history of the monument, which it is painful to review. Much labor, of which the public knew nothing, had been performed by the Directors and especially by the Committees under their direction, as the preceding statements will show. But the severest struggles and trials were to come, which, if foreseen at the outset, might have caused the most steadfast friends of the enterprise to shrink from the undertaking. It was scarcely to be expected, that so great a work could be accomplished by private means without a severe struggle; and while many suffered serious mortification at the delays and embarrassments experienced during the ten years in which it was almost entirely suspended, the world at large will accord the highest praise to the generation which at length by private energy completed it according to the original scheme. The few who exhibited unwearied perseverance amidst much discouragement are worthy of remembrance as lasting as the structure which their sacrifices contributed to rear. In truth had it not been for the energy and devotion of the few referred to, we cannot see, what would have prevented a failure which would have been an abiding mortification and a reproach.

It was supposed by many, that the sum originally obtained for the Monument was greater than it really was, and that it had been injudiciously expended. The records of the Standing and the Building Committees, which during the period of their

holding office, from July 1824 to June 1830, had more than fifty formal meetings, occurring almost weekly in the most urgent stages of the work, at which all the members were present with remarkable punctuality, will show, that no public work has received more constant or faithful supervision. These gentlemen bestowed their time and labors gratuitously and besides were liberal donors. A statement, however, published in 1830 by the Association, as also one published, after the monument was completed, by the Architect and Superintendent Mr. Willard, which for its clearness and thoroughness reflects great credit on the science and ability of the author, viewed in connection with the details given in the preceding pages, will correct the misapprehension just referred to.

The amount of subscriptions to August 1830, together with the grant of the State (\$6000) was in round numbers \$65,000. About \$23,000 was paid for the fifteen acres of land; the expenses of the occasion when the corner stone was laid, and for books, engravings, plans &c. increased this amount to more than \$30,000. If to these items be added the cost of hoisting and quarrying apparatus, indispensable in the prosecution of such a work, there was left scarcely more than \$30,000 for the building of the monument, the estimated cost of which at the outset was \$100,000, exclusive of the land. At the time of suspension, then, the forty feet which had been erected had cost \$53,000; but taking into view the amount of materials then on the ground and the amount already quarried, the work was computed to be two thirds completed: so that the prospect was fair, that the whole expense of the monument would fall within the original estimate. The statement of the architect, before referred to, shows, that, had no delays occurred, it would have fallen considerably *within* that estimate. When we reflect, that nothing is more common than for stone structures to exceed estimates, the preceding statement, drawn from the accounts of

the Building Committee and of the architect, make it plain, that there could not have been rash or unwarranted expenditure. The details furnished by the able and thorough exposition of Mr. Willard, which explain in the most satisfactory manner the methods employed in the work both at the quarry and at the obelisk, and also compare the actual cost of the work with the market prices for the same sort of work at the time and similar works elsewhere, may justify the assertion, that the monument on Bunker Hill is the cheapest work of the kind of modern times.

Among various expedients to relieve the embarrassments of the Association and to further the execution of the enterprise the following alone are worthy of notice. A committee of twenty was appointed by the Directors when the work was suspended, to devise some method of relief.—A sale of a portion of the land, divided into building lots, was urged by some, and strenuously opposed by others who were anxious to preserve the Battle Field from all incumbrance and occupancy forever, as an additional memorial of the great event commemorated.—Again in November 1829 a vote was passed in the Building Committee to recommend to the Directors to petition the Legislature for a Lottery, in order to raise funds for liquidating the debt for which the members of the Building Committee were personally liable, and to complete the monument.—Moreover, in January 1830, a proposition was received from Mrs. S. J. Hale to raise the requisite funds by an appeal to the ladies of New England, which was gratefully acknowledged and accepted.

* These measures were without effect. The Committee of twenty early in 1829 prepared an address to the Public with the form of a subscription, but in consequence of the commercial depression then existing, it was deemed inexpedient to circulate it. The scheme of a Lottery was adopted by the

Directors, notwithstanding strenuous opposition of some of the Board, and a petition was introduced into the Legislature, but, to the great satisfaction of many, a passage was refused. The efforts of the Ladies resulted in the contribution of less than \$2000 to the funds of the Association. During these efforts earnest and eloquent appeals were made from time to time in Newspapers, which, if they excited attention, failed to produce a decisive movement.

The only remaining expedient for relief of the Association and the completion of the work, which in its unfinished state was unsightly and a constant reproach to the public spirit and patriotism of the community, was the sale of a large part of the land owned by the Association on the summit and sides of the Hill. The earliest, most constant and efficient friends of the project resisted to the last the sacrifice of a portion of the battle-field which they were anxious to preserve, as an open area which would be invaluable in future years in the midst of a dense population, and yet more, in order to perpetuate the identity of a spot celebrated as the theatre of a most momentous event of modern history. The views of these gentlemen were presented with great force in an appeal to the public prepared by Hon. Edward Everett in the summer of 1831, the tone and argument of which may be seen from the following extracts.

After urging that the proposed sale of the land would not yield any thing that could be applied to the *completion* of the monument, two considerations are presented adverse to cutting up the field into house lots and covering it with buildings.

The first is the desirableness of the open area which it would afford in the midst of a large and rapidly increasing population. "The open summit and sides of Bunker Hill will then be to this part of the population, what Boston Common now is to the community generally, and in particular to the immediate neigh-

borhood of that delightful spot. In natural advantages of all kinds, Bunker Hill is equal to the Common—in command of prospect, superior. Nothing but a few trees are wanting to make it as attractive a spot, merely as a promenade, as any in the world. Suppose these trees to be planted and the noble monument to be completed,—is there an individual in the community, who, on the mere score of beauty, convenience of exercise, healthful recreation, and enjoyment of prospect, would endure the thought of cutting up such a spot in the heart of a crowded population into lots, and covering it with houses and the buildings connected with them? Is there a citizen of Boston, who would tolerate the idea of thus destroying the COMMON, supposing it could be legally done?"

"But we must confess, that these are not our strongest reasons, against selling Bunker Hill. Such a project is strongly forbidden by all the considerations, which make this spot dear to the patriotic heart. The great object of the Bunker Hill Monument Association was to *preserve* the Hill and to perpetuate its venerable features. It was stated in the first address of the Directors to the public, that it was their object, if possible, to rescue that field from the ploughshare. It was intended, from the first, to preserve the scene of the ever memorable sacrifice of the 17th June, 1775, free of all objects alien from its character; and sacred from every use, uncongenial with the feeling, which must be excited in the hearts of all who visit its holy soil. To what purpose will it have been rescued from the ploughshare, if it is to be surrendered to the shovel and the spade? What would have been said of the citizens of Athens, in the flourishing periods of the Republic, if, for the purpose of raising an inconsiderable sum of money, they had cut up the plain of Marathon, into house-lots? The person who would go about to sell Boston Common, would as it is, be held in detestation. But suppose, in addition to its present

hold on the affections of the people, it were endeared to them as the scene of the first great struggle of the revolution ; and it were proposed not merely, that the beautiful sod which covers it, but the ashes of brave and patriotic men, resting beneath, should be surrendered to the pick-axe ;—should be shoveled away and carted off,—would not the man who should under these circumstances insist on such a project, be regarded as an object of abhorrence ?

When our fellow citizens, from a distance, shall come to explore the scene of the action, on which so much depended for the country and the world, and shall find it covered with brick buildings, its character changed, its identity destroyed, how will they exclaim against the want of patriotism in those who could permit such a violation ! In vain will our children attempt to retrace the vestiges of this momentous event ; to mark on the consecrated soil, the successive steps of the battle. Where, they will inquire, was the first position of the patriots ? In what direction toward the scene of action did the British forces cross the river ; and at what point did they strike the hill ? Show us, they will say, the field, over which they advanced to attack the breastwork ; and on which they received that first deadly fire, which taught them, that patriotism could supply the place of discipline, that the conquest of a people was not to be effected by mercenary legions, nor the love of country to quail beneath the terrors of a fierce soldiery ? Where, they will ask, was the rail fence, and the connecting lines,—and the shore, where the British light infantry marched to out-flank the patriots, and were destroyed by a scattered fire from behind rocks and banks of earth ? On which side did that weak column advance, which finally bore down our exhausted forces, and compelled them slowly, reluctantly, and with sullen obstinacy, to leave the redoubt, heaped with the killed and dying, and flowing with blood ? Where stood the

brave PRESCOTT to superintend the labors of his little band, and watch the first rays of that eventful day, which was to bring on him the power of a British army? Where rode the gallant PUTMAN, fearlessly exposing himself to the fire of a thousand muskets; at one time restraining, and then urging on the ardor of his courageous, but inexperienced countrymen? Where is the spot on which the illustrious WARREN, the all-glorious volunteer of the day, ever the first where danger was to be encountered, the last where death was to be escaped,—where is the spot on which the martyr fell? Is this the field—are these the spots—are these the vestiges which we propose to obliterate and destroy?"

This appeal failed of its object, perhaps, as often happens in matters which do not touch individual interest, from neglect in following up the impulse, which it gave, by prompt and energetic measures. The causes of inaction or of delay need not be specified, even if it could be done with accuracy. There were however individuals who were ready, in the failure of other resources, to assume the responsibility of the work; as the writer feels justified in recording on the evidence of one of the individuals referred to, who was intimately acquainted with all the proceedings and actively participated in them.

To test the public sentiment one of the individuals* referred

*The late AMOS LAWRENCE, Esq., whose lamented decease since the manuscript was prepared for the press renders unnecessary any delicacy in publishing his name. His personal interest and efforts in behalf of the enterprise are material facts in its history, of which his characteristic energy and the ample resources with which Providence had crowned his exertions in mercantile life, added to distinguished munificence, and a noble patriotic spirit, enabled him to be an efficient promoter. It is now proper to record farther what the writer has learned from a private memorandum which he has been permitted to use, that Mr. Lawrence made certain provisions by will as early as December, 1830, with a view to securing the battle-field, liquidating the debt of the Association, and completing the Monument. These provisions were superseded by another will executed April 1, 1833.

to, proposed, Sept. 1831, in a letter addressed to one of the earliest friends of the project, Dr. Warren, to subscribe \$5000, on condition, that \$50,000 should be raised within a year. The following passage in the letter will show the strength of feeling, cherished by the most zealous friends of the enterprise in its broadest aspects, on the subject of the *sale of the land*. "I think it inexpedient to allude to the sale of the land at Bunker Hill as a resource for paying the debt, except in a case of extreme necessity; and at this time I should personally sooner vote to sell ten acres of the Common in front of my house to pay the city debt, (of Boston,) than vote to sell the ten acres on Bunker Hill, until it shall appear that our citizens will not contribute the means of saving it." No movement followed this proposition. The same offer was renewed, by the same individual, June 1832, just before the Annual Meeting of the Association, in a letter to another gentleman, in which he pressed with great urgency the scheme of a subscription to be set on foot by the Association to obtain the necessary means for completing the Monument and preserving the land. The gen-

after his health had failed so as to forbid active participation in the affairs of business, an extract from which will show the views of the Testator. "I am of opinion that the land owned by the Bunker Hill Monument Association in Charles'own will be of great value to posterity, if left as public ground. The spot is the most interesting in the country; and it seems to me, it is calculated to impress the feelings of those who come after us with gratitude to the people of this generation, if we preserve it for them. The whole field contains about fifteen acres; and in the hope of preserving it entire, either as the property of the State, of this city, or of any other competent body, and with the further view of ensuring the completion of the monument, which now stands as a reproach to us, I have set apart a larger share of my property than would be necessary, had not the subject been presented to the public in such a manner as to discourage future attempts at raising the necessary funds by voluntary contributions." The amount thus devised for the Monument, in case that amount should not be raised in other ways, was \$50,000.

tleman thus addressed acted ; a movement was commenced, but fell through from want of some one or some few, it may be, to urge it forward. Again, in April 1833, when the commercial prosperity peculiarly favored such an effort, a note was addressed by the same gentleman to Hon. S. T. Armstrong, Hon. Charles Wells, J. T. Buckingham and J. P. Thorndike, Esqrs. members of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association, proposing to that Association to attempt the raising by an appeal to the public of \$50,000, to be paid or secured within three months, for completing the Monument and preserving the field, and accompanying the proposal with the offer of five thousand dollars, towards the amount or ten per cent on any less sum that might be raised—and the same sum, as a donation for the uses of the Charitable Mechanic Association. A public meeting in consequence of this proposal was called by this association to be held in Faneuil Hall, May 28, 1833, which was numerously attended and was addressed by Hon. Edward Everett among others, in one of his happiest efforts, as it was regarded at the time. His speech on that occasion was widely circulated through the press and forms an important part of the History of the Monument. It may be found in the recent edition of his works, vol. 1, page 354.

The meeting at Faneuil Hall, and especially the speech of Mr. Everett, was regarded as deciding the matter. Multitudes went their way under the excitement of that occasion, exclaiming, that the Monument was finished and the land saved. But this effort failed through want of some individual or individuals of high character and influence who would undertake to press and pursue the object in the freshness of the impulse which had been imparted.

RESUMPTION OF THE WORK.

Enough however was done through the instrumentality of the Mechanic Association to justify, it was thought, a resumption of the work in the following year. The Monument Association, May 5, 1834, empowered and requested the Mechanic Association to apply the moneys collected by them to the work of the obelisk "by raising the same to the elevation of 159 feet, 6 inches." It was also voted, that when the obelisk had reached that height, *it should be considered as completed*. At the same meeting a committee reported in favor of offering for sale the land owned by the Corporation, reserving the square now enclosed, in order to liquidate the debt of the Association.

This debt was contracted in the prosecution of the work, the Building Committee having borrowed money of one of the Boston Banks, for which they made themselves individually responsible. The Bank had been extremely liberal; but payment could be no longer delayed. The only security, which these gentlemen had, was a mortgage of the land in question; and the sacrifice, against which they had themselves struggled with great earnestness and perseverance, as preceding statements show, seemed inevitable.

The Monument Association voted, June 17, 1834, to offer the land for sale. The ten acres were divided into fifty shares at five hundred dollars each, double the market value, and were all taken and paid for by friends to the enterprise, with the provision, that the Association might redeem the land within a certain period, and in the hope that the field would be secured to the public. Thus was the Association relieved of its debt. One more effort to preserve the land, was made by a large proprietor* in the ownership, who proposed to the remaining

* Amos Lawrence, Esq.

proprietors to take their shares at a certain value, and to transfer the land, thus conveyed, to the Monument Association, or to the State, or to any competent body, *to be kept open forever*. The proposal was not acceded to; and it having become evident, that the public would not prevent the sacrifice, the matter was left to take its course. The Association did not redeem the land; soon after it was offered for public sale, and was lost to the monument beyond recovery.

Through the instrumentality of the Mechanic Association nearly \$20,000 were collected. To this sum was added by vote of the Monument Association the Ladies Fund, then amounting to nearly \$3000; and the whole, excepting a balance of about \$800, was expended on the obelisk under direction of a Building Committee of the Mechanic Association consisting of Hon. Charles Wells, George Darracott, Jonathan Whitney, Charles Leighton and John P. Thorndike Esqrs. This Committee and the Association under which they acted deserve credit for faithfulness and assiduity in the discharge of a patriotic duty. The services of Mr. Willard, as Superintendent, were again secured; who was assisted by Mr. James S. Savage, as before. Mr. Charles Pratt was the master mason. By this effort the obelisk was raised to the height of eighty feet. At this point the work was again abandoned in consequence of the failure of funds.

COMPLETION OF THE MONUMENT.

Various schemes were again proposed to secure the means for completing the work. Public appeals were made in the newspapers, but nothing effectual was done during the succeeding four years to encourage the friends of the enterprise. At length early in 1839, a new proposal was made to the Mechanic Association by Amos Lawrence Esq., whose name may properly be mentioned as the matter became one of public notoriety.

Having learned that this Association contemplated a renewed effort, he addressed a note to George Darracott Esq., President of the Mechanic Association, in which after expressing regret, that his feeble and precarious health would not permit him to spend time in making personal application to the citizens of Boston, he adds: "The next best thing I can do is to give money. The Monument Association owe a debt. To discharge the debt, finish the monument, surround it with a handsome iron fence and otherwise ornament the ground as it deserves, will require \$40,000 more than it now has. If the Bunker Hill Monument Association will collect \$30,000 dollars the present year and pay off the debt, I will give to the Charitable Mechanic Association \$10,000 to enable it to complete the work in a manner that our fathers would have done, had they been here to direct it." Judah Touro of New Orleans, formerly a citizen of Boston, made a donation of the same amount. Thus encouraged the Mechanic Association proposed their subscription, but as it was thought inexpedient to press it, nothing further was done.

In the Annual Report of the Monument Association, June 1840, the doubt was expressed, whether the present generation would witness the completion of the Monument. This expression of the Report being repeated within a few days in a "sewing circle" of Boston, several ladies proposed the idea of a Fair in behalf of the object. The suggestion at once received favor; before the end of the month the formal sanction of the Board of Directors of the Monument Association was given to the new project and measures were taken immediately in furtherance of it. A circular recommending the plan was issued by a committee of the Directors, and appeals in its behalf were made through the public press. In the principal towns of New England, and indeed throughout the land, ladies were speedily busied in preparation of articles for the Fair.

Many towns sent contributions of money. The Fair was held in Quincy Hall, Boston, Sept. 1840, and continued seven days, exclusively under the direction of the ladies, although with the hearty coöperation and efficient aid of gentlemen who had, from the first, labored in behalf of the object. The Fair was admirably conducted. Every effort was made to prevent the common abuses of such methods of raising funds. Articles offered for sale were required to be good of their kind, and to be held at fair prices. Nothing was permitted to be done to extort money ; no raffles or drawing by chances was allowed. The strictest decorum was maintained.—The project was successful beyond expectation. Thousands from city and country flocked to the scene ; and the abundance, variety, and beauty of the articles exhibited, as well as the arrangements, were creditable in the highest degree to the industry, taste, skill, and spirit of the Ladies of New England.

The proceeds of the Fair, \$30,000, with the donation of Messrs. Lawrence and Touro of \$10,000 each, together with more than \$5000 from other sources, afforded the means of completing the Monument according to the original design. The vote of May 1834, that it should be regarded as finished when it had reached the height of 159 feet, was rescinded. Hon. Charles Wells, George Darracott, J. P. Thorndike and Charles Leighton Esqrs. were appointed a Building Committee by the Mechanic Association. In Nov. 1840 James S. Savage was contracted with to complete the obelisk according to the original design of the Architect, Solomon Willard, and under his superintendence. In May 1841 work was resumed ; and at 6 o'clock on the morning of July 23, 1842, the last stone was raised in presence of the Officers of the Association, the American flag being waved from it during its ascent and under a salute from the Charlestown Artillery. The Monument now stands two hundred and twenty one feet high.

The writer ought now to state, that his object has not required him to record the names of individuals except so far as they were officially and immediately connected with the work. It is due however to several gentlemen whose names do not occur in the preceding history, or which are only mentioned incidentally on account of their official relation to the enterprise, to remark, that they expended much time and labor, of which the public know nothing, without any other reward than what is enjoyed by a consciousness of duty to a great and patriotic work faithfully discharged. For example Hon. Nathaniel P. Russell rendered gratuitous service for twenty five years as the able and efficient Treasurer of the Association. The importance of his trust may be estimated from the fact, that more than \$370,000 passed through his hands.

The Celebration in honor of the completion of the monument, June 17, 1843, which was similar in its arrangements to that which welcomed the commencement of the work in 1825 and scarcely less imposing, when the same eminent man, whose discourse had contributed so much to give dignity and distinction to the former occasion, was spared to crown by another of his matchless efforts the successful accomplishment of the enterprise, is the closing scene in the *History of the Bunker Hill Monument*.*

*Those who may be curious to know the details of the work on the Monument, the methods employed in quarrying, transporting and raising the stone, with the expense of the different experiments made during the progress of the work, will find their curiosity gratified by the Quarto Volume, "Plans and Sections of the obelisk on Bunker Hill &c. by Solomon Willard, Boston 1843." A more general statement may be found in a smaller volume; "Bunker Hill Battle and Monument, Charlestown, 1843;" and also in the account of the Monument near the close of the "History of the Siege of Boston," a valuable work from the hand of Richard Frothingham Jr. Esq., of Charlestown, published, Boston, 1849, which contains a summary of the receipts and expenditures on the work and an enumeration of the individuals whose services are specially acknowledged in the records of the Association.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 800 473 5

TO
PR
23
PAID